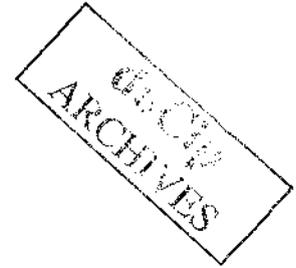




ITALY



Statement

by

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Deputy Permanent Representative**

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Mr. Chairman,

Sustainable Development and Indigenous Issues programs should help to solve or at least relieve some of humankind's greatest problems. These problems, which have been underlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and by other UN and EU programs, are, first and foremost, poverty, environmental degradation and reduction of diversity.

Poverty is associated with other equally important problems that are focus of efforts by the CSD, WSSD and MDG partnership and cooperation program. Some examples are: food security, the environment and sustainable development, rural development, environmental degradation, natural resource management including forestry, water, farmlands for the agriculture and livestock, cooperation with developing countries, local communities, indigenous people, and the role of women.

The reduction of cultural diversity and the spread of uniformity should be cause for greater alarm and attention, since this leads to a loss of knowledge, skills and technologies that are fundamental to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

No people or community can be sure to obtain food, prosperity or wealth if it is deprived of its own knowledge base. While knowledge is synonymous with wealth and well-being, it is also fed by diversity, which continuously produces knowledge and innovation.

Mr. Chairman,

Italy is a country where the variety of environments, climates, products and processes were shaped by the diversity of the local and traditional cultures contributing to its essence. Traditional food products are produced by using either traditional raw materials, a traditional mixture, or traditional production methods, and they are protected and promoted by a quality label in compliance with EU legislation.

We also recognize our environmental, cultural and linguistic diversity and its countless distinct components, including indigenous peoples, nations, tribes and local communities. Local communities, which are often poor, have a deep acquaintance with the fragile ecosystems in which they live and work. Aboriginal people and local communities are therefore often in the best position to help fight phenomena such as desertification and poverty. Traditional techniques of farming, harvesting, fishing, breeding, and producing and preserving food products are the result of rules codified over millennia. Such rules are differentiated by geographic context, and they are born from relations between a community and the inanimate, plant and animal world that surrounds it.

Cultural diversity is a guarantee of knowledge. It can be holistic, specialized, unique, local, sustainable, vulnerable, or exposed to standardization. Food reflects the relationship between culture and the environment and between plants, animals and human beings. Hence the maintenance of cultural diversity and knowledge is ensured by traditional lifestyles, including nomadism, hunting, gathering, fishing, small-scale farming, which have a high cognitive, technological and ritual value.

Cultural and environmental diversity are of equal consequence to the continuation of life on our planet. To achieve cultural well-being, we propose that traditional knowledge, cultural diversity and the recovery of the traditional food

production and environmental management techniques become one of the main subjects of Food Security, Development Cooperation and Sustainable Development programs.

One of the main objectives of such programs is to increase sensitivity to the benefit of acknowledging cultural diversity as a fundamental resource for harmonious living in a sustainable society, based on the recognition and respect of human rights.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.